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(54) Title: PROCESS FOR MAKING A PELLET

(57) Abstract: The invention comprises a shaping process for making pellets of a thermoplastic extrudable resin composition. The resin composition comprises a thermoplastic polymer, plasticiser and optionally further additives. The plasticiser comprises a component which is solid at room temperature. The process is run at a temperature above the melting point of the plasticiser and below the melting / plastification temperature of the thermoplastic polymer.

PROCESS FOR MAKING A PELLET

The present invention relates to a process for making pellets of a thermoplastic extrudable polymer.

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Processes for making pellets of thermoplastic extrudable polymer are well known in the plastic industry. Typically the pellets are cylindrical and approximately 3mm in diameter and 3mm in length. The pellets are used in a wide range 10 of plastic article manufacturing processes.

The pellet manufacturing process generally includes a plastification step. In this step the formulation to be pelletised is melted and fed into a twin screw extruder. This has 15 been seen to be beneficial as the pellets produced have been found to comprise of a homogeneous blend of the pellet components due to effective mixing of all molten components in the extruder.

20 EP-A-0 415 357 describes the making of pellets comprising polyvinylalcohol (PVOH) by melt extrusion with the extrusion being carried out in the temperature range of 150-195°C.

Pelletising processes having a plastification step have several disadvantages associated therewith. The principle disadvantage is the requirement for heating, which means that 25 the energy consumption of these processes is very high.

Furthermore these 'hot' processes are not suitable for polymers which are heat sensitive (such as PVOH) due to heat induced decomposition. Also these 'hot' processes give a heat 30